

A SOCIALIST COMMENTARY ON COLONIAL AFFAIRS

Venture

JOURNAL OF THE FABIAN COLONIAL BUREAU

VOL. 2 No. 3

APRIL, 1950

MONTHLY 6d.

Incorporating *Empire*

Comment

THE REAL ISSUE BEHIND SERETSE

THE treatment of Seretse Khama by the British Government has evoked a remarkable and spontaneous uprush of feeling. The facts of this case have made headline news, so that they need not be repeated here. No one concerned with good relations between races could remain unmoved by the deplorable implications of this affair; there has been dismay at the effect on colonial opinion—as well as on decent men in the Colonial Services. This has been said publicly not once, but a hundred times in the last weeks—that it has been said with such force is the one bright spot in an otherwise miserable situation. Pressure has compelled the Government to publish a White Paper giving the reasons for its action, but this statement will hardly help matters, for it justifies the Government's decision with the argument that the recognition of Seretse would have caused disturbances and faction in Bechuanaland. If the whole affair could be isolated to this one point, the Government might have had right on its side (we say 'might'); but inevitably the broader question of race prejudice has raised its ugly head, and nothing, short of a complete reversal of policy, will remove the conviction, at least among coloured people, that race prejudice was after all at the bottom of the matter. Furthermore, no matter what denials are made, it will be believed that fear of provoking trouble with South Africa influenced the Government. The real dilemma was whether we should resign ourselves to allowing the one million people of the Protectorates to fall under possible South African domination, or whether, by sacrificing Seretse, we could avoid this risk. The Government chose to sacrifice Seretse. In

doing so it has only postponed the inevitable clash with South Africa, and it has lost the confidence of those who would have supported it in this clash. There is as little chance of peace in Africa with South Africa in her present mood, as there was in Europe when Hitler's ideas dominated Germany. This is the real and unpalatable issue which the Seretse affair has brought into the open. Let us face the fact that there is a grim struggle ahead.

CHANGE AT THE COLONIAL OFFICE

A LOT of nonsense has been talked in some circles about the defeat of both Mr. Creech Jones and Mr. Rees-Williams at the polls as representing the 'unmistakable verdict' of the British people on an unpalatable colonial policy. It so happens that in the constituencies of both these Ministers (and in a number of others), the boundaries had been redrawn since the last election, cutting off certain solid Labour-voting areas. Mr. Creech Jones, in particular, was a victim of this geographical redistribution. The question of colonial policy, rightly or wrongly, played absolutely no part in the election, either on a national level, or in individual areas. It is a pity it did not, because, in spite of criticisms, the record of positive achievement is pretty remarkable. Whether individuals liked all his actions or not, the Colonial peoples had in Mr. Creech Jones that rare phenomenon, a Colonial Secretary who *knew* his subject and really cared about it. His way of working was less through the spectacular and dramatic (which he always shunned) and more through hard, painstaking attention to details. When much else is forgotten, people will remember his quiet efforts in founding new universities, providing thousands of scholarships for colonial students, pushing ahead everywhere with constitutional and local government advances, re-

shaping the colonial service, putting a new vitality into colonial research, reforming the penal system, improving the machinery of labour negotiations, fostering co-operatives, eliminating the abuses connected with mining operations, and many other such acts which the Colonies desperately needed, but which never make the headlines. It is not going to be easy for the newcomers at the Colonial Office to maintain the swift flow of activity which we were beginning to take for granted. Mr. Jim Griffiths, the new Secretary of State, is one of the most popular figures in the British Labour Party—warm-hearted, sincere and kindly to a degree, he cannot fail to make friends with the people from the Colonies whom he will meet. With his own simple background as a Welsh miner, he has a natural sympathy for all those who consider themselves 'under-privileged.' We wish him luck in his new and difficult task.

RACE TENSION IN EAST AFRICA

RACIAL tension in East and Central Africa is a continual, and by no means diminishing, source of anxiety. The latest trouble has originated in Tanganyika. When the UNO Visiting Mission reported on this Trust Territory last year, it had some harsh things to say about the Government's failure to afford any adequate political representation to the huge African majority population. Since then progress has been made in setting up Provincial Councils, and suggestions have been worked out by the Government for using these inter-racial Provincial Councils as electoral colleges for the Central Legislature, each Council to elect one African, and one non-African member. The Africans would at first be nominated, and then eventually elected. The non-Africans were to be elected from a common electoral roll of Europeans and Asians; there would also be 15 members nominated by the Governor. These proposals were confidential, but seem to have leaked out and have created a storm of opposition among settlers, not only in Tanganyika, but in Kenya. Excited protest meetings have been held in Kenya, where it was claimed that the Europeans might be deprived of any representation whatever under these arrangements, and that the whole basis of European influence would be undermined. What was particularly unfortunate was that a resolution was passed at a crowded Nairobi meeting calling for unity between the European communities of East Africa and those in Northern Rhodesia 'and other countries to the South.' There seems, indeed, to have been an appeal to South Africa, which was publicly deplored at the meeting by two prominent Angli-

can and Presbyterian clergymen. In the meanwhile a Committee is at work on constitutional reform in Tanganyika, consisting of 7 Europeans, 4 Africans and 3 Asians. The Committee has unanimously rejected the Government suggestions and is working with a free hand. The whole situation is dynamite, and we can only view the future of Southern Africa with the utmost misgivings as long as the ambiguous British attitude towards the Union and towards racial prejudice in the neighbouring Colonies is allowed to continue.

FIRST STEP ONLY

THE Report of The Standing Closer Association Committee of the British Caribbean* on Federation of the West Indian Colonies falls short of the aspirations of the most forward-looking movements in the West Indies. It had always been hoped that a federation would be at least internally self-governing from the start, and that full responsible government would be established in the constituent Colonies at the same time. The Report, which now goes to the Colonial Legislatures for discussion does not go as far as this. It proposes a federal Government with at least three officials out of a total of six to be named by the Governor-General. The elected side of the Executive would be seven members of the Legislature chosen by a 'Prime Minister' elected from the Federal House of Assembly. The House of Assembly, however, would be elected while an Upper House, a Senate, would have 23 appointed Members. The franchise would be the same as that now existing in the different territories, with adult suffrage introduced later. Constitutional progress in all the Colonies therefore remains a matter of urgency, particularly in British Guiana and the Leeward Islands. On the knotty problem of representation, the Report suggests that two Members of the Senate should be appointed from each territory except Montserrat, but in the House of Assembly, weight will be given to population—Jamaica having 16 seats, Barbados 4, Trinidad 9, and so on. There is also a careful allocation of federal and local powers. West Indian unity, which still requires considerable building from the bottom, necessitates federal administrative machinery as well as a constitutional framework. Proposals for the unification of the public services are made in a second Report.† The compromise proposals of both Report can be improved in the Legislatures. At last the West Indies have taken the first step.

* Colonial No. 255. H.M. Stationery Office.

† Colonial 254. H.M.S.O.

COTTON, CHIEFS AND CHARLATANS

Uganda has been the scene of riots on two occasions in the last five years. Each time a Commission of Inquiry has diagnosed the causes. But little action was taken to improve matters after the 1945 troubles. What will be done this time?

UNLIKE the riots of 1945 the Uganda disturbances of April, 1949, did not come as a complete shock to the Government, but otherwise Sir Donald Kingdom's Report* leaves much the same impression as the similar Report of 1945. At that time we commented†: '... this Report... reveals such a gulf between the administration and the people, that there should now be a full-scale independent enquiry into the whole situation in Uganda.' That gulf, unhappily, is still there.

Nobody pretends that it is easy to govern Uganda. Trouble on both occasions has arisen in Buganda, where the system of indirect rule has, as elsewhere, been subject to great strain with the development of an educated class. Nor is it easy to give political scope to this class, since the system of chieftainship is quite undemocratic, the chiefs at various levels being, in effect, officials of the ruler, the Kabaka. Secondly, a still undeveloped people has received the full impact of world market conditions on its cotton crop. While it is selling at high prices, a fund is being built up against the day when the world price falls—a well-recognised method of avoiding great fluctuations in price, but one that is not easy to explain to the farmer. Lastly, there have been post-war shortages, both of materials and men, leading to a high cost of living and a weakened administration.

Wide scope for dissension has thus been presented to interested persons, and a fine crop of rumours has been sown by 'agitators' who do not appear to have reached a very high level of political understanding and who have written and spoken to their followers in hysterical terms. Yet the grievances, however ill expressed, were genuine, and it is a sad comment on the administration that there was so little constitutional outlet for their expression. In 1945 the Commissioner reported‡: '... the Governments, both Protectorate and Native, as well as the people, may be all the better for having been awakened up with a rude jolt. *I have had before me many earnest patriotic Baganda honestly anxious for their country's good. All that seems to be required is*

that those who have been using their undoubted abilities to hinder Government should now use them to assist, and put aside their private political ambitions to work together for the common weal.' In 1949 many of the same people took prominent parts in the disturbances, and were spoken of by the Governor as 'a few evil and self-seeking men... acting under Communist inspiration.'* Yet the Report states, '... there is no evidence that the disturbances were actually Communist inspired or were fomented or financially assisted by the Communists,' although it is known that the principal instigator, Semakula Mulumba, has Communist contacts. Uganda has had its second 'rude jolt.'

The most serious economic grievance was that of the farmers. In September, 1948, after many expressions of dissatisfaction, the Legislative Council wound up the funds, which had been accumulated from the part of the prices for coffee and cotton which had been withheld from the producers. Some of the money was spent on development and welfare projects, some went to Native Administrations, £500,000 was allocated for a Land Bank and Building Society (not yet established), and nearly £4m. was allocated to the new Cotton Price Assistance and Coffee Price Assistance Funds. Since then, the amount in the Cotton Price Assistance Fund has more than doubled, but world prices are still high, and these monies have therefore not been paid out. The propaganda of the African Farmers' Union encouraged the belief that the farmers were being deliberately cheated. The farmers also wanted to gin their own cotton, particularly as it was widely felt (with good reason) that some unscrupulous Indian firms were cheating the Africans on a large scale. But it is difficult for any new firm to enter into ginning, owing to the licensing and pooling arrangements established after the war, and the Africans have not yet broken through with co-operative societies of their own, while Government plans to purchase a ginnery had not materialised by April, 1949. The Uganda Farmers' Union collected cotton from the growers which, in the last resort, it was unable to get ginned. A further difficulty was that, for reasons of disease, it was forbidden to keep cotton beyond a specified date except in licensed premises. The Buganda Government ex-

* Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Disturbances in Uganda during April, 1949.

† Empire, September-October, 1945, page 7.

‡ Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Disturbances which occurred in Uganda during January, 1945

* The Times, April 29, 1949.

tended the date for buying cotton to April 14 (after which the only alternative was to burn any left outside the stores). It was therefore no accident that the disturbances occurred on April 26.

The disturbances aimed at overthrowing the Native Government of Buganda, not the protectorate Government. At that time there were 89 members of the Lukiko (native council), of whom 60 were notables selected by the Kabaka. Since 1945, 36 of these were in fact elected, but these 'unofficial' representatives had little contact with the people. The Report indicates that Buganda got the worst of both worlds: 'there has been little constructive contribution to Government made by the elected members, whilst the authority of the Chiefs has tended to be undermined.' The reformed Lukiko has not been a success, and there has been no democratisation of the system of choosing the chiefs lower in the hierarchy of officials. While it is obvious that the so-called Bataka Party and the Uganda Farmers' Union (whose leader, I. K. Musazi, left for England four

months before the outbreak without having made arrangements for ginning the cotton that had been collected) were adopting irresponsible political methods, it is only fair to recognise that it was almost impossible for grievances to be voiced through the existing constitutional machine.

It should also be noted that Buganda was influenced by events outside. There is an obvious connection between the fear of the Land Acquisition Ordinance and the objection to Paper 210 under which the East African High Commission has been set up. Racial politics in Kenya are reflected in African anti-white agitation elsewhere.

The net result is a highly discreditable state of affairs. It remains for the Africans to build up a constructive movement, instead of relying on leaders who apparently believe in revolution from outside. And it remains for the Government of Uganda to devise means of taking the people into its confidence, and to establish constitutional channels through which such a movement can make its contribution to the welfare of the country.

MISSION TO WEST AFRICA

The first United Nations Mission to visit West Africa has now published its reports on the Trust Territories of Togoland and the Cameroons.

THE United Nations is now learning, with a vengeance, something of the complexities of colonial problems. A Visiting Mission consisting of an American, a Belgian, a Mexican, and an Iraqi, has spent some months in West Africa, and has now produced a most fascinating series of Reports to the Trusteeship Council. This was the first United Nations Visiting Mission to inspect the Trust Territories of Togoland and the Cameroons, and it is clear from the Reports that the members were enthralled by their task. It is equally clear that they are unable to propound any easy remedies; they are very cautious in their criticisms and proposals. In fact, when it comes to the British administration of Togoland and the Cameroons, they are decidedly complimentary, which is a happy change from the acrimonious invective to which we have become accustomed in United Nations' colonial discussions.

One of the major questions with which the Mission was concerned was that of frontiers and administrative units. In many Colonies this issue hardly arises, but the peculiar history of these Trust territories has saddled them with arbitrary frontiers creating serious problems of their own. Before 1914 they were German Colonies, but after

the first World War they were each divided between Britain and France and the four sectors tagged on to the neighbouring British and French Colonies. Scant regard was paid to the break-up of tribal units and there was no conception of creating homogeneous or viable areas which might one day stand on their own. The result is that two long narrow strips of land, each containing a population of less than 1,000,000 souls, now stand attached to the Gold Coast and Nigeria (and similarly with the French territories). These strips have been declared Trust Territories, with the goal of self-government before them, even though they are incorporated for administrative and economic purposes with the adjoining Colonies, and even though their populations are divided into groups having nothing in common. In the meantime the Trusteeship Council and, indeed, the General Assembly of the United Nations (under the influence of Russian, Latin-American and other suspicions that here was a trick of the imperialist powers to incorporate a little extra territory into their possessions) have expressed concern regarding the administrative union of Trust areas and Colonies, wherever they are situated. In Togoland the position had been

further complicated by the petition of the Ewe tribe for unification into a separate administrative unit of its own, which corresponds with none of the existing frontiers. The Ewe tribe spreads over part of French Togoland and part of British Togoland and part of the Gold Coast as well. In the rest of Togoland live entirely different tribes, who do not wish to be set aside in a separate Ewe-dominated country. Furthermore, the Ewes in the Gold Coast have little desire to be cut off from the higher standards already prevailing in the Colony.

These complicated problems were brought before the Mission in a series of gatherings and a spate of petitions. The British administrations in the Gold Coast and Nigeria also put forward a definite view; they are convinced that Togoland and the Cameroons have enjoyed great benefits from their attachment to the richer colonial areas next door; and that certain social services and economic arrangements are only possible within a larger administrative unit. In the end the Mission suggested, very tentatively, that there should *not* be any administrative separation, but that a greater regional autonomy might be given to the Trust Territories—local political institutions might be better developed, and stronger representation afforded on the Central Legislative Assemblies of the Colonies. In other words, the possibilities of a federal solution are hinted at.

In recording their impressions of both Togoland and the Cameroons, the Mission was forcibly struck by the extent of freedom of speech under British administration.

'Everywhere it went,' states the Cameroons Report, 'it found evidence of that. Whether at public meetings or private interviews, people expressed themselves with the utmost freedom, many times in the presence of members of the administration. The Mission informed itself, moreover, on this question from the educated sections of the community, and was inevitably assured of the happy existence of this freedom, a matter of which those persons were not only aware, but appreciative. The Mission has reason to think that the utmost liberty is left to the various sections of the people to speak from their mind, to present their petitions and to voice their complaints in whatever way they liked, which they did.'

On the question of economic and social development the Mission was also appreciative of what had been done. A particularly interesting account is given of the Cameroons Development Corporation which is described as an unusually enlightened piece of colonial development work. The establishment of this Corporation in 1946 contrasts sharply with what was done after the first World War when the ex-German plantations were auctioned back to the previous German plantation-holders. This time the whole area of a quarter

of a million acres was purchased by the Government and taken over by a public Corporation, working not for private profit, but in the interests of the people of the Cameroons. The Mission quotes the words of an African Member of the Nigerian Legislative Council who, when faced with these proposals in the Council declared that they 'seemed too good to be readily believed and credited.' Nevertheless, the Mission sees room for improvement in the Corporation, particularly in the provisions for associating and consulting the local population. It was also seized with the extent of the work still remaining to be done in education and health.

An intriguing climax to the Cameroons journey, was the Mission's visit to the octogenarian Chief, the Fon of Bikon, in order to investigate complaints made to the Trusteeship Council on his possession of 110 wives. The Report gives an enticing account of the journey to the Fon's mountain village where the members had to climb 3,000 feet to attain their goal. The Chieftain and his wives were obviously indignant at the aspersions cast on them, and the ladies presented a memorandum saying that they were quite content with the present arrangement. The Mission then writes with understanding about the whole system of African plural marriage as a form of social security which will have to remain 'until Western civilisation through education convinces the African that other ways are better and preferable.' They suggest measures to make it easier for women to refuse and to withdraw from unwanted unions.

The Value of International Accountability

One cannot help reflecting, on reading these Reports, how valuable, in principle, is this system of international supervision. In practice the trouble has been that, because of the general tensions at the United Nations, no colonial problem is publicly debated on its merits, but rather as a peg for 'cold war' propaganda; the whole work of UNO on dependent territories has thus been thrown into disrepute. But if a chance is given for objective investigation—as in the case of this West African Mission—the results are only to the good. The Colonial peoples achieve a new confidence from the knowledge that there exists a higher impartial court of appeal for their grievances; world opinion is educated into an intelligent appreciation of the baffling problems which confront colonial administrations; and the Administering Powers are fortified by sensible advice instead of being irritated by mischievous sniping.



THE 'colonial' world is ceasing to be colonial, if it was ever really comprehended in that much-abused term. For instance, the continuous outbreaks on the Rand, or of faction fighting among the Mxunu Zulu in Natal, are as relevant to the central issue of the world-advance of the materially backward peoples, as the new Fair Deal Bill for American Negroes (February 24), or the minutiae of European development in Africa. They all belong to the adventure of closer relationship. The sad thing is that our news-values are so fundamentally perverted that people prefer to read rather of sudden and unexpected violence than of a long series of piecemeal development and reforms. Presumably this is because the first are rarer. If the world is not more careful, however, it will soon be the small creative items that will be the manna in a newsman's wilderness of cruelty and death.



AS it is, one is forced to start with the world-crisis. In our sector, American diplomats and experts have been meeting in Lourenço Marques for Africa, and in Bangkok for South-East Asia. It is the latter which is most immediate, and where Dr. Jessup presided. In Java, the forces of central authority seem to be asserting themselves, and the adventurer Westerling betook himself to Singapore, to collect war funds, only to be arrested by the British authorities. The anti-bandit month started on February 26 throughout the Federation, with 350,000 volunteers enrolled, mainly Malay, but with many Chinese. Just before it started, the terrorists stepped up their action, killing 19 people, their women and children, in a remote village of Johore. The war continues in Indo-China, where a hill-tribe are said to have rebelled against Ho Chi-Minh. If so, it is the only good news for the French, whose *morale* cannot have been increased by the Peyré scandal, in which we have the Chief of the General Staff, in Paris, enlisting the aid of this shady businessman, in the hope of obtaining the field-command in Viet Nam. Karens, White Flag Communists and others are still active in Burma, where elections have been postponed another year. In Hong Kong, the

Americans have clashed with the British authorities, who ruled to hand over to the Government of Mao Tse-tung, 71 aircraft grounded in the Colony, when their crews went over to the Communists. A fire has destroyed the walled city of Kowloon, rendering 8,000 squatters homeless for a second time.



THE one system which can combine excitement and construction is, in its better days, parliamentary democracy. And from Malaya, two Malays and a Chinese arrived in London in February, along with people from many other parts of the world, including Mauritius, to see how 85 per cent of the maturest electorate on earth can quietly vote on issues vital to us all. The achievements of the Malaysians' own country and town have not been negligible. For Singapore alone, a drop of 45 per cent in infant mortality, of 43 per cent in tuberculosis, with clinics trebled (36) and out-patients quadrupled (375,000) and 80 new schools built: this is not such a bad record since the end of the war. The Far Eastern Representative of the United Nations Department of Social Activities also praised the social survey, the five-year social plan, the children's social centres, the boys' clubs, the arrangements for probation and after-care. Up in the Malay peninsula, the rice crop is a record, well over 400,000 tons. If one could but reverse men's values! The news of the Seychelles would not then be the bitter reform struggle and the resignation of Charles Collet, the main popular protagonist, but a new deal for the lepers in the island of Curieuse. In Aden it would be the programme of three new girls' schools, Protectorate primary schools, and a technical college, rather than the urgent demands for self-government. Though of course they all really go together.



BRITISH efforts in Africa have at last received recognition from the United Nations,

POINTS



with tactful if not glowing reports by the mission to Togoland and the Cameroons, and some friendly comment on Tanganyika. Meanwhile, Italy returns for a second chance in Somalia, with £3.5m. voted for the administration, while the Libyans seek trade contacts in Rome. Only in Eritrea do the *shifita*, the Copts, the Moslems, provide the old kind of news, with daggers, bombs, etc. In British Africa, the main news also belongs to the future, despite an attempt to stab the Chief Secretary of Nigeria, H. M. Foot (February 19), and the later arrest of youthful desperadoes like the 24-year old 'secretary' of the Zikist Movement which has far outrun Zik. More serious opinion turns on the deadlock in the constitutional discussions at Ibadan, where the North demanded half the seats in the Central Assembly, and a distribution of funds by head; and the withdrawing of Lagos from the Western Region. In the Gold Coast also, moderate opinion has turned its back on the school-boy plotter, Nkrumah, whose tepid attempt to harness labour discontents broke down ignominiously in January. Here news of the future concerns the Volta River, from which piped water is being drawn off to the Krobo states in the South, while at Ajena there may be a power-station developing 800,000 kilowatts. In Kenya, a committee report on bride-price is accepted by the African Council, which thinks that, though a private transaction, the details should be supervised by the Location Authority. In Tanganyika, the news is perhaps slightly more dramatic, with the tour of a mixed racial committee to discuss a new all-racial constitution founded on Provincial Councils; and the grant of a monopoly in coal and iron prospecting to the Colonial Development Corporation, which goes shares with the Government. From Northern Rhodesia, with its thousand projects based on the prosperity of the copper mines, one significant item is that the Overseas Food Corporation are to set up a 1,200 acre pilot groundnut scheme at Mumbwa, after two years of experimental plots. From French Africa comes the news that the papers delight to print—though

they do not print the cause. Twelve people have been killed in the populous Ivory Coast, and many wounded, by police firing on sympathisers of the inter-territorial *Rassemblement Democratique Africain*, demonstrating for the release of leaders held without trial since early 1949.



IN the West Indies, Princess Alice was installed as Chancellor of the University College on February 16 before 3,000 spectators. The fires below are shown by a riot in Honduras. Here the people, sorely hit by devaluation, have been demanding a grant of £1m. They have been offered an immediate £84,275 from the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund, on road projects. In Jamaica also a new high wind is blowing, with Bustamante and the Governor booed by spectators at the opening of the Legislative Council, and threats by the former that the island might secede if higher prices are not offered by Britain for her sugar. The bitterest scenes have been reserved for a strike at the multi-millionaire Sunset Lodge Hotel on the north coast, whose owners, the Syrian firm of Issa, refused to treat with the Peoples National Party trade union, which was in the great majority, but with the Bustamante union. The latest development is a suit for libel against the *Gleaner* by the P.N.P. leader, Norman Manley. Meanwhile, an American firm, Reynolds Metal Corporation, are to spend £4m. on bauxite development in the North, making use of a large advance from E.C.A.



THERE are no people to be developed in Antarctica, but a vast land clothed by the ice-cap; and we may note the work in progress there, as part of the drive for a closer and more effective world. The latest expedition is a joint British-Scandinavian team to Crown Princess Martha Land (Western Queen Maud Land) where they have built winter quarters two miles from the edge of the glacier. A small French expedition has set up a base camp on Adélie Land, which, with other French possessions in the southernmost oceans, has been placed under a special new district of Madagascar.

175

CORRESPONDENCE

The Editor, *Venture*

Dear Sir,—Will you allow me to point out that Dr. Rita Hinden's account of Labour's attitude to Empire and the Party's colonial policy during the years 1919 to 1945 (in the February issue of *Venture* and elsewhere) is in important points inaccurate? She represents it as purely utopian and dismisses it as consisting simply of 'dreams and ideals and propaganda.' She says that our 'easy attitude to colonial problems' was 'liquidate the Empire, free the peoples of Asia and Africa.' This is pure imagination, as the discussions and resolutions of the Party's annual conferences and the detailed statements of Party policy would have shown her had she read them. In the years of which she is so contemptuous there was within the Party a considerable company of persons with much colonial knowledge and experience who devoted an immense amount of time and thought to working out a practical colonial policy for Labour. At their head were men like Charles Buxton and John Maynard. To represent them as in favour of liquidating the empire and as dreamers and utopians is ludicrous. They were in favour of giving self-government to India and other Asiatic peoples who were, in their view, capable of it, and subsequent history has proved them to have been right. They consistently opposed the idea of liquidating the empire or of giving self-government to the backward peoples of Africa. They worked out in great detail a practical policy for the economic development of education and social services, and for political education in our African colonies. Their view had a great influence upon Socialist and Labour thought with regard to empire and colonies. They were accepted by the Party Executive and received the support of an overwhelming majority of the rank and file. The Party published its detailed policy in a pamphlet in the early 'twenties and again in even greater detail some ten years later. If Dr. Hinden would study those documents, she might discover how distorted her picture is of socialist opinion and policy on empire and colonies in the benighted years before 1945.

Yours, etc.,

Leonard Woolf.

Monks House,
Rodmell, Lewes.

Seretse Khama

Sir,—I feel bound to express my horror on the Government decision in regard to Seretse Khama.

As *The Times* points out in its leader (March 9) 'there is very little to be said for a decision which shirks a great issue of imperial policy,' and from a Socialist standpoint there is even less to be said for an administrative act which sets aside all the questions of principle which the Labour Movement has stood for over many years.

Quite apart from the individual case of Seretse this matter raises the whole gambit of race relations in the Colonial Empire and the Commonwealth, and I can think of no single action at the present time which could so antagonise native opinion against the Labour Government, especially following so closely on the Michael Scott affair. It would seem that the views of the anti-British bigoted Government of Dr. Malan and the white minority Government of S. Rhodesia have greater influence in

Whitehall at the present time than the views which prevailed to give self-government to the new Dominions in the East.

I would appeal, therefore, that the Colonial Bureau, the Parliamentary Colonial Group, local Fabian Societies and Labour Parties should make every effort to show their displeasure at this decision, and to attempt within the democratic machinery of the movement to do everything to get the earliest possible reversal of this un-Socialist act.

Yours, etc.,

Francis K. Eady.

75, Holland Road,
Kensington, W.14.

EAST AFRICA AGAIN

Last month we asked for comment on an article, suggesting a new form of 'federal democracy' for some of the East African Colonies. The following interesting contribution has been received:—

THE writer of your article 'New Approach to East Africa?' in the March number of *Venture* disclaims any relation between the proposals outlined therein and 'the intolerable humiliations of South African "segregation"', yet these proposals arise from the same root as *apartheid*, in the theory of which Dr. Malan's 'humiliations' are not inherent. In both cases, the conception of African society is static—there are three separate races in East Africa, and separate they shall remain: therefore let them have constitutional machinery which not only reflects the present-day reality of separateness, but fastens it upon them for the future also. This will not do. Mediaeval society could function in this way because there was at the top a central authority strong enough to hold the ring, and because it was the politically weak minority that was confined to the ghettos. In East Africa it is the majority community that is politically weak, but this will not remain so, unless constitutional machinery is devised, as suggested in your article, to deprive it of the weight of numbers. That is an outrageous suggestion: numbers do count in modern democracy, not because the majority is necessarily the wisest, but because the activities of the modern state penetrate right down into the lives of the smallest and weakest of its citizens. To deprive numbers of their weight therefore deprives these citizens of their right to share effectively in their own government. And who is to hold the ring at the top? You suggest a Federal Assembly at the centre composed of equal numbers of representatives from each racial Assembly. Is there to be also a Cabinet based on parity? And if the three races are so unable to work together lower down in the constitutional scale that they must have separate Assemblies, how are they to achieve unity in the Cabinet at the top? Or is there to be no Cabinet, but instead an arbitrator eternally provided by the Colonial Office?

Your comparison with Nigeria does not bear examination. The constituent parts of the Nigerian federation which appears to be emerging are geographical, not communal entities—that is to say, a true federation is being made. Your proposed structure would be based on com-

mumal, not geographical, divisions, and would therefore create as many problems as it attempts to solve. Would the Africans on the 'White' highlands, for example, be allowed to participate? Presumably they would, but as a separate entity from the Europeans living in the same area. This would be quite unlike the Nigerian federation and unlike the federal arrangements of Canada, but it would be only too much like *apartheid*.

Why not let us be honest and admit that East Africa has no future as a self-governing territory unless the different races do learn to work together politically at

all levels? It is not yet necessary to give full weight to the majority race, for that would be to give weight to inexperience and illiteracy as well as to numbers. But the Africans will not always be politically backward, and the population of East Africa has ceased to be static. In the fluid society which is already being created there will be no room for tribal politics, of which the Kenya settlers are at the moment the most vehement exponents. East Africa must not go out into the modern world with a tribal or mediæval millstone fastened round its neck.

Fabian.

THE SERETSE AFFAIR IN PERSPECTIVE

On March 21 a deputation from the Fabian Colonial Bureau was received by Mr. Gordon-Walker, Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations. The deputation was led by Lord Faringdon and consisted of John Hynd, M.P., John Parker, M.P., Reginald Sorensen, M.P., John Rankin, M.P.; Professor M. Fortes, Dr. K. Little, Mr. H. D. Hughes, Mrs. Hilda Selwyn-Clarke and Dr. Rita Hinden. After the interview the following Press statement was made:—

'The deputation regretted that the decision of the Bamangwato people to accept Seretse Khama as their chief had not been recognised by the British Government. It urged on the Minister that even if recognition were not accorded to Seretse at this time, he should be permitted to return to Bechuanaland, not only for the purposes of his law case and the confinement of his wife, but also to remain there. It was felt that it would also be desirable that he should be associated with whatever administration was to be set up.

The deputation pointed out the strong reactions that have been aroused in the colonial territories, and that the Government's action was widely interpreted as the working of the colour bar.

The deputation was assured by the Minister that there was no legal form of racial discrimination in the High Commission Territories nor any legal ban on mixed marriages. The Minister said that he would take note of these views and undertook to give consideration to other points made by members of the deputation with regard to the administration of Bechuanaland.

In reply to a question, the Minister stressed that the Government's policy with regard to the High Commission Territories remained unchanged.'

PERSPECTIVE

There are many facets to the Seretse affair—some with far-reaching implications.

The following major points have arisen:—

1. THE ACTUAL MANNER IN WHICH SERETSE WAS HANDLED BY THE GOVERNMENT.—On this there is wide agreement that the Government blundered badly.

2. THE SUPPRESSION OF THE REPORT OF THE JUDICIAL ENQUIRY.—The Government has

given two reasons for this—that the Report was only one factor in its decision; and that there were arguments in the Report with which the Government disagreed but with which it would find itself associated if publication were authorised. Neither of these reasons have proved convincing to public opinion, and it is suspected that the Report contained passages which would have provoked conflict with Europeans in Southern Africa which the Government wanted at all costs to avoid.

3. THE DECISION NOT TO RECOGNISE SERETSE AS CHIEF.—The main reasons adduced are concerned with disturbances and faction in Bechuanaland. These have also failed to convince, in face of the acceptance of Seretse by the final *kgotla*, and the patent failure to appreciate that Seretse's non-recognition would cause at least as much trouble as his recognition.

4. THE QUESTION OF COLOUR PREJUDICE.—The Government has denied emphatically that it was motivated by prejudice. Many people are prepared to concede the truth of this, but believe that what it was really motivated by was *the fear of prejudice in other people*.

5. THE FUTURE OF THE HIGH COMMISSION TERRITORIES.—This is the real burning issue behind the whole affair. South Africa has been claiming the three Protectorates for many years; the demands have become more insistent since Dr. Malan took office. Britain feels a real responsibility for these countries and has repeatedly said that she stands firm against any transfer as long as the people do not want it. But will she fight South Africa should it come to the point? It is clear that the Government does not wish to face this eventuality, with all that it may mean to Commonwealth strategy and defence, and is doing its utmost to avoid any provocation that might lead to so dangerous a situation.

6. WHITE SETTLER SENTIMENT IN EAST AND CENTRAL AFRICA.—The Government is fearful of antagonising white opinion, particularly in Kenya and the Rhodesias, and thus having on its hands a series of hostile groups who are already openly looking to South Africa for support.

7. COLONIAL OPINION.—The colonial peoples have been consolidated into an implacably hostile front against Britain on this issue. The Government is likely now to find itself in the uncomfortable position of choosing between black support or white support in Africa. It may face a serious setback to its progressive policy elsewhere in Africa. The first clash between the liberal policy of the Colonial Office and South African racialism has been brought appreciably nearer exploding point.

Guide to Books

The Nigerian Legislative Council

By Joan Wheare. (Faber and Faber. 18s.)

Mrs. Wheare's book is the fourth volume in the series on Colonial Legislatures, edited by Miss Margery Perham, and published under the auspices of Nuffield College, Oxford. It maintains throughout the high standard of scholarly objectivity established by the earlier volumes, and includes, besides the bare bones of constitutional detail, an introduction sketching the historical background and the social and economic conditions on top of which the Legislative Council structure has been imposed. It is a pity that more space could not have been given to this section. The main problem of forming a constitution for Nigeria is that of devising a system of representation which will enable the mass of the population to choose their legislators at the centre in a manner intelligible to them—that is to say, by methods which do not cut right across their own traditional institutions but do forge a link between them and the Legislative Council introduced from outside. The difficulty of this problem is not sufficiently brought out in Mrs. Wheare's introduction, though she shows that the inadequacy of 'indirect rule' was one of the subjects most frequently raised by the African members of the Council between 1922 and 1946. The Council, as she describes it, was almost 'untouched by hand,' and many of its defects were repeated in the Richards Constitution which succeeded it. Mrs. Wheare emphasises that the demand for constitutional change came from *outside* the Legislative Council, principally from the press, and that the only effective criticisms of the 1946 Constitution also came from outside. The book ends at 1946, and consequently does not cover the discussions now taking place for yet another Constitution. This history of the earlier phases would not have led the reader to expect either the recent movements against the chiefs in the Western Provinces or the serious split between North and South that has emerged in the current constitutional conferences. It is easy, of course, to be wise after the event, but one would still have thought that from a study covering 24 formative years there should have emerged stronger indications of the growth of the sense of frustration which has bedevilled Nigerian politics since the war, and which provides the principal contrast between conditions to-day and the pre-war Sunday school atmosphere described by Mrs. Wheare.

Bermuda in the Old Empire

By Henry C. Wilkinson. (Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press. 25s.)

This richly detailed history of Bermuda during the hundred years between dissolution of the Bermuda Company in 1684 and the end of the American Revolutionary War is a sequel to Dr. Wilkinson's earlier *Adventurers of Bermuda*.

A member of one of Bermuda's old families and the Colony's Senior Medical Officer, Dr. Wilkinson writes more as the appreciative connoisseur of historical detail than as the social administrator. He specifically leaves all but the most general interpretation of his material for a further study. In fact, this monument of painstaking

research contains the raw material not for one but for many further studies. Here is the history of an island at the centre of Atlantic maritime activity, of a trading, privateering, piratical people, whose cedarwood sloops were the best in the world. Here is a Bermuda version of the old colonial system of government, with its inter-related land-owning cliques at constant loggerheads with the Governor. Here, too, is a complex collection of biographical material, some relating to obscure Bermudian worthies, some to celebrities, like the Board of Trade Popple Family, two of whose members served as Bermuda Governors. Most valuable are the chapters devoted to social history. Bermudian slavery, with all its disadvantages, was more humane, more patriarchal than in the plantations. Details about schools, religion, morals, fashions, epidemics, build up a picture of an ignorant, impoverished, dynamic island people.

It is sometimes difficult to distinguish the author's judgments from the facts. Though numerous, the references are not always specific and there are gaps.

I. S. J.

Booker T. Washington

By Basil Mathews. (S.C.M. Press. 18s.)

This is an exceptionally interesting and moving story. Booker Washington, who eventually became the adviser of American Presidents and achieved an international reputation, was born in slavery on an estate in Virginia, and was nine years old when the slaves were freed. Emancipation only worsened his material condition, and it was nothing but sheer force of character that led him to overcome every obstacle which barred him from even the rudiments of education, and then of finding his way to Hampton, one of the few American negro institutes for higher education at that time. Later he was appointed head of a new college about to be formed—Tuskegee Institute—and the account of the remarkable initiative he put into this work is an object lesson of the highest order. He had great gifts of oratory and leadership and an assured political career was his for the asking, but he chose to be an educator instead, in the belief that through education and industry, rather than through political action, his people would be uplifted from the morass of ignorance and poverty which was their curse. His methods were not acceptable to many other negro intellectuals, but they were certainly original, and still to-day are an immense challenge to the negro world. Here is a book to be read by every African—whether he agrees or not, Booker Washington's life will be an inspiration to him, as it is to us all.

African Abstracts

Vol. 1, No. 1. January, 1950. (International African Institute, London, S.W.1. Annual subscription, 26s.)

A new quarterly, edited by Professor Daryll Forde and published with the assistance of UNESCO. It gives informative abstracts from current periodicals, British, French, Belgian and others, concerned with African ethnology, social studies and linguistics.

From 'Blackbirding' to Anthropology

A WEALTH of information has recently been published on the South Pacific, a forgotten area in peace-time, but during the Pacific war a savage battleground. Three books, in particular, are now before us*; they are complementary as one covers British nineteenth century history, the second post-war administration, and the third is an anthropological study of seven Pacific cultures.

The historical background presents no unfamiliar picture. For a century Britain resisted assuming internal control or annexing the islands. During the most acute period of pressure that action be taken, a Liberal Government under Gladstone was in office with a Treasury firmly refusing to grant money for the extension of British responsibility. The main issue that forced the hands of Britain was the infamous 'blackbirding,' the kidnapping of the islanders for sugar plantation work mainly in Queensland and Fiji—a more modern version of the slave trade. The long record of atrocities by British subjects in this labour traffic resulted in the murder of Bishop Patteson in 1872, and in the same year a shocked House of Commons passed the Pacific Islanders Protection Act. The efficient implementation of the Act forced the British Government to abandon a policy which had sought to maintain the political *status quo*, control the labour trade, and punish the worst excesses of British subjects, without accepting administrative responsibility. But not until 1893 was the Western Pacific High Commission set up.

Mr. Belshaw's experience of administration half-a-century later would suggest that British reluctance in the nineteenth century has been followed by a hang-over of neglect in the twentieth. As with every other Colony, post-war shortages of staff, capital and consumers' goods and transport, all provide excellent excuses for delayed action on reform; but a time-lag of *three years* to obtain 'legislative authority and approval of concrete details of organisation' for the setting-up of Native Councils can only be judged as sheer neglect. The author comments that this was not an unusual delay.

The most serious problem that has arisen in the government of these islands is the lack of objectives, the absence of clear insight into the general aims that should guide administration. Without directives, administrative officers necessarily act on their own judgment and may pursue mutually exclusive policies. The conflicts that arise in the administration of justice, the difficulty of finding incentives for the development of native peasant agriculture, the revolutionary impact of missionary teaching, the sensitive understanding necessary to blend Christian ethics and native custom, all demand the contribution of the anthropologist for the directives which lead to solutions. In Dr. Mead's study, the people become alive, intensely interesting in their different ways of working out their sex and work patterns, the position of the children and the family group. In the second part of Dr. Mead's book, where she turns to the United States, describing the relationship of mother and babies and the 'dating' of adolescents, one senses her values of how much we can learn from the study of more primitive cultures which have a more stable family life.

In a host of different ways the peoples of these islands have had their life distorted by Europeans pursuing

material interests or religious convictions. The breaking-up of family life and even depopulation through the labour traffic, the fundamental cleavages between natives, who have refused to follow the Christian teaching and those who appear to have accepted our values, the far-reaching impact of war through the high standard of living of the American Army, all have left headaches for conscientious administrators. The high wages paid by the Americans to the Labour Corps, and the 'pickings,' resulted in a natural loyalty to the American, a discontent with European administration and the native pre-war standard of life.

To add to the confusion in these islands, there are the conflicting colonial policies of France and Britain. Development in the New Hebrides is at the mercy of the Condominium ('pandemonium' is the local variant), a joint administration by France and Britain, where national rivalry and bargaining for position nullifies the working out of any progressive policy. Mr. Belshaw reports that the one effective organisation is the Customs, which is responsible to one head and appoints staff, irrespective of nationality. Could not a United Nations Mission make a contribution to the existing state of affairs?

A new French Dominion?

New Caledonia, under French administration, has valuable minerals; nickel and chrome are worked. The mining interests are considering the possibilities of white labour and a reorganisation of the mines through greater mechanisation owing to the difficulty of recruiting Asiatic labour. There is talk of a White New Caledonia policy and a desire to become a French Dominion on the lines of Australia and New Zealand. Following the usual lines of French colonial policy, after the war, all the exports of the Colony had to be sent to France to assist in French rehabilitation and the Colony in return was flooded with luxury wines and perfumes instead of coal and food.

The native of New Caledonia is not automatically a citizen. Certain tests of service, status and education are applied which had resulted in 1946 in about 5 per cent. of the natives being enfranchised. The Europeans are prepared for increased native representation but not racial equality.

The most important post-war move in the Solomons, the setting-up of Native Councils, was handicapped by the delay of three years mentioned above. In the meantime, a movement known as 'Masinga Rule' sprang up, anti-European in outlook, but based on a desire for higher wages, more material goods and further education. It was strengthened by the return of men from the Native Labour Corps, who had been in contact with the American troops. After the arrival of naval vessels and the arrest of over 100 leaders at the end of 1947, the movement collapsed. The grievances remain. The position of the Native Councils (and the Native Courts) has now been clarified so that native control of local affairs is reasonably comprehensive, subject to the approval of the District Commissioner. But much has to be done in economic development, the discovery of incentives to improve and increase native agriculture, particularly copra, the establishment of marketing co-operatives, credit co-operatives and, indeed, the usual democratic organisation necessary for the improvement of the standard of living of peasant communities.

Dr. Mead and Mr. Belshaw have given us much to think over, it remains to be seen whether the Islanders will benefit in the future from their field studies.

* J. M. Ward, *British Policy in the S. Pacific* (Australia Pub. Co. 22s. 6d.); C. S. Belshaw, *Island Administration in S.W. Pacific* (R.I.A. 12s. 6d.); M. Mead, *Male and Female* (Gollancz. 18s.).

SOMETHING TO SING ABOUT

What are they thinking, the mass of Africans who do not write down their thoughts for us to read, who do not make speeches or lead deputations, and who seldom, if ever, join in uninhibited conversation with Europeans? In South Africa, the field for expression is tragically narrowing, but at the same time there are devoted Europeans working with Africans to record now, in the vernacular and translation, the thoughts and feelings expressed in song. *Lalala Zulu*,* the first publication of the African Music Society, enlivened with delightful cartoons by Eric Byrd goes some way towards answering our question.

There are songs of a proud history, when the Zulus seemed heirs to a new land in the South:—

*In Shaka's days we lived well,
In Shaka's days nothing worried us,
Because we were ruled by that old man, Shaka.
He walked erect.*

*He said when he died: 'Never will you rule Zulus!'
Though our ancestors are dead we still remember them.*

Others remember Shaka too, like the Bambo:—

*We were scattered by the 'plague.'
We came to the Xhosa.
We said: 'We are destitutes
Because we beg.'
Now we yearn for our home
Beyond the Tugela
With but our hearts,
That country of our forefathers.*

It is not only those driven ahead of the Zulus who yearn for home. In the mines, on the farms, in the towns, the humiliations of migrant labour are recorded in songs:—

*Take off your hat.
What is your home name?
Who is your father?
Who is your chief?
Where do you pay your tax?
What river do you drink?
We mourn for our country.*

* *Lalala Zulu*, 100 Zulu Lyrics. By Hugh Tracey. African Music Society, Johannesburg. 12s. 6d.

For Reference

April, 1950

CONTENTS OF THIS NUMBER

Comment

The Real Issue Behind Seretse	-	-	-	-	1
Change at the Colonial Office	-	-	-	-	1
Race Tension in East Africa	-	-	-	-	2
First Step Only	-	-	-	-	2
Cotton Chiefs and Charlatans	-	-	-	-	3
Mission to West Africa	-	-	-	-	4
Compass Points	-	-	-	-	6
Correspondence	-	-	-	-	8
The Seretse Affair in Perspective	-	-	-	-	9
Guide to Books	-	-	-	-	10
From 'Blackbirding' to Anthropology	-	-	-	-	11
Something to Sing About	-	-	-	-	12

Nor is it easy to resist. There was a religious leader, Mgijimi, who was caught; a trade union leader who embezzled the subscriptions; and from the 1929 anti-pass riots in Durban there has come down the sad comment:—

*We are made to pay money that does not help us.
Our leaders strive for honours
While we do not know where to go.*

Even in wartime, when training for overseas action, Zulus in South Africa were not allowed to carry arms.

Not all the songs are sad. There are gay songs for the concert hall, sung with European 'stage mannerisms some thirty or forty years out of date'; there are songs for dancing, about boundary lines, and food, and railways; and there is a hopeful, realistic school song which offers a way out:—

*All sorrow will vanish
And be dispelled by learning alone.*

There are also, naturally, love songs, of which perhaps the most charming shows that some European innovations are heartily welcomed:—

*Come here my beloved.
Come, give me a kiss.
There is a new law
Which says we must embrace each other.*

And there is one song of triumph, not over fellow-Africans, but over Europeans. It relates, curiously enough, not to the great victory over the English at Isandhlwana in 1879, but to the subsequent capture of the Prince of the Prince Imperial, which brought together for one moment, far away from Europe, the traditions of Bonaparte and Shaka:—

*The cannon was fired.
We caught the white prince ourselves.*

There will be many more comings-together of Europe and Africa in future decades. If Mr. Hugh Tracey and his colleagues have their way, the confluence of streams in the future will be a happy one.

FABIAN

COLONIAL BUREAU

11 Dartmouth Street, London, SW1

Annual Subscription to Bureau . . 20s.
(including *Venture*)

Full-time Students' Subscription . 10s.

Annual Subscription to *Venture* only 7s.

Further details of membership from the Secretary